

IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend claims 1 and 4 and add new claim 14 as shown in the following claim listing:

1. (currently amended) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp comprising a discharge vessel,

the discharge vessel enclosing, in a gastight manner, a discharge space provided with a filling of mercury and a rare gas,

the discharge vessel comprising a luminescent layer and means for maintaining an electric discharge in the discharge space,

a portion of the surface of the discharge vessel facing the discharge space being provided with a protective layer adjacent said luminescent layer, characterized in that

the protective layer comprises aluminum oxide or yttrium oxide and further comprises a borate and/or a phosphate of an alkaline earth metal and/or of scandium, yttrium, or a further rare earth metal.

2. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the alkaline earth metal is calcium, strontium, and/or barium.

3. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the further rare earth metal is lanthanum, cerium, and/or gadolinium.

4. (currently amended) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the aluminum oxide comprises particles with an effective particle size d_p not exceeding 3 μm , preferably in a range of $0.1 \leq d_p \leq 0.8 \mu\text{m}$.

5. (previously presented) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the protective layer comprises an alkaline earth borate, and in that the thickness of the protective layer is in a range from 0.1 to 50 μm .

6. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the protective layer comprises SrB_4O_7 .

7. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 5, characterized in that the thickness of the protective layer is in a range from 1 to 20 μm .

8. (previously presented) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the discharge vessel comprises at least one stem, said stem being provided with the protective layer.

9. (previously presented) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the discharge vessel is made from a glass comprising silicon dioxide and sodium oxide, with the glass composition comprising the following essential constituents, given in percentages by weight:

60-80 % SiO₂,

10-20 % Na₂O.

10. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 9, characterized in that the glass composition comprises the following constituents:

70-75 % SiO₂,

15-18 % Na₂O,

0.25-2 % K₂O by weight.

11. (previously presented) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a side of the

protective layer facing the discharge space is provided with a luminescent layer of a luminescent material.

12. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the luminescent layer is provided with an additional protective layer.

13. (original) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the luminescent material comprises a mixture of green-luminescing, terbium-activated cerium-magnesium aluminate, blue-luminescing barium-magnesium aluminate activated by bivalent europium, and red-luminescing yttrium oxide activated by trivalent europium.

14. (new) A low-pressure mercury vapor discharge lamp as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the aluminum oxide comprises particles with an effective particle size d_p in the range of $0.1 \leq d_p \leq 0.8 \mu\text{m}$.